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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SARAJEVO 000937

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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR(DICARLO), EUR/SCE(HOH/FOOKS), P FOR
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SUBJECT: BOSNIA - TAKING ON RADICAL BOSNIAK MUSLIM POLITICS

REF: A. SARAJEVO 807

[1](#)B. SARAJEVO 595

Classified By: Ambassador Douglas McElhaney. Reason 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: We stepped up our efforts during the week of April 23 to undercut efforts, particularly of Bosniak member of the Tri-Presidency Haris Silajdzic, to further radicalize the political situation in Bosnia. We met with the Bosniak Party for Democratic Action (SDA) leadership to deliver a clear message that they need to play a more constructive role in shaping Bosniak public opinion. We plan a similar meeting with the Social Democratic Party leadership after the May Day holidays. We urged the Pakistani Embassy to recommend that Pakistani President press Silajdzic during the former's April 27-28 visit to Bosnia. We also continued our efforts to shape the international community's response to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) verdict that genocide took place in and around Srebrenica from July 13, 1995. Ambassador pressed Republika Srpska (RS) PM Milorad Dodik to follow through on his plans to assist Srebrenica, and Dodik confirmed that several promised projects will be underway by mid-May. At our urging, Dodik also met with Bosniaks from Bratunac to discuss their plans to bury loved ones in the municipality. Dodik committed to support a compromise proposal suggested by the Bosniaks. We have urged Serb member of the Tri-Presidency Nebojsa Radmanovic to refrain from responding precipitously to a Silajdzic proposal that the Presidency visit the United Nations on May 21. END SUMMARY

Pressing SDA to Lead

[1](#)2. (C) On April 15, Ambassador met with the Party for Democratic Action (SDA) Presidency to underscore growing USG concern about the current political situation in Bosnia. He warned that nationalist rhetoric from some quarters was radicalizing Bosniaks, blocking efforts to forge consensus on reform, and setting back the country's prospects for Euro-Atlantic integration. He called on the SDA, as the largest parliamentary party, to resume its leadership role within Bosniak politics and reminded Presidency members of the constructive role SDA had played in the past. The Ambassador also praised SDA President Sulejman Tihic for having the courage to take tough decisions and reach compromises on issues such as police and constitutional reform. The meeting was closed to the press, but it attracted the Bosnian media's notice and commentary. Thus

far, the coverage has (helpfully) stressed the call for SDA leadership in breaking the current political gridlock.

13. (C) Tihic, who told us he afterwards that was very pleased with the meeting, presented new SDA positions on the "three most pressing issues confronting Bosnia: constitutional reform, police reform, and Srebrenica." Tihic said the SDA would support the U.S.-brokered package of constitutional amendments with one "small modification": elimination of entity voting for all exclusively state competencies. On police reform, Tihic outlined a proposal similar to RS PM Milorad Dodik's March 12 offer (i.e., all responsibility for police shifted to the state, a new Srebrenica police district, a police district that crosses the inter entity boundary line around Sarajevo, and the words "Republika Srpska" in the name for local police districts in the RS)(RefB). Finally, Tihic outlined an elaborate proposal for Srebrenica "special status" that he claimed would not involve the secession of from the RS. Instead, SDA would support a state-level law that provided a unique legal framework for Srebrenica in certain areas (e.g., police, natural resources, taxes).

Engaging the Pakistanis and the Turks

14. (C) The Ambassador also spoke this week with the Pakistani Ambassador to Bosnia. He suggested that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's official visit is opportunity for a long-time friend of Bosnia to deliver a clear message to Bosniak member of the Tri-President Haris Silajdzic that Silajdzic must moderate his nationalist rhetoric. (Note: Musharraf's visit begins on April 27 and includes a speech to

SARAJEVO 00000937 002 OF 003

the Parliamentary Assembly as well as a visit to Tuzla, where he served as a peacekeeper. End Note.) The Pakistani Ambassador replied that she shared USG concerns about Silajdzic and had recommended Musharraf raise them during his meeting with the Presidency. Separately, the Ambassador spoke with the Turkish Ambassador to Bosnia about Silajdzic's April 23 dinner in Istanbul with Turkish PM Tayyip Erdogan. The Turkish Ambassador had told us earlier that Erdogan planed to chastise Silajdzic about the damage he was doing to Bosnia generally and the Bosniak cause specifically. The Turkish Ambassador asserted that Erdogan had delivered the message, but was opaque about the details of Silajdzic-Erdogan exchange.

Pressing for Progress on Srebrenica and Bratunac

15. (C) This week OHR completed work on a draft set of recommendations for Srebrenica and announced the HighRep announced that he planed to appointment a Special Envoy for Srebrenica and the surrounding municipalities. The recommendations, which the Embassy played an active role shaping, along with plans for Srebrenica already announced by Bosnian political leaders will be discussed at May 4 meeting with the new Envoy and will provide a framework for the Envoy's work. The key challenge will be ensuring Bosnian leaders fulfill their recent promises and take concrete (and constructive) steps to improve three areas of priority interest to Srebrenica and other Eastern RS municipalities: justice, economic, and social (i.e., benefits) issues. Justice issues are the most prone to political manipulation, given the intensity of emotions involved. In conversations with OHR and others, the Ambassador has stressed the importance of leveraging improvements in the State Prosecutor's and State Court's capacity out of the political crisis generated over the ICJ verdict.

16. (C) We have has spoken with Dodik several times about his economic package for Srebrenica and the importance of early tangible results. Dodik and his staff have confirmed to us that money for the RS plan has already been set aside and

reviewed more detailed spending plans. For example, Srebrenica Mayor Malkic and RS officials have already discussed specific electrification projects, some of which will begin on May 15. Some of the promised road construction will start on May 20. Dodik also promised the Ambassador that he would help resolve the controversy over plans to bury Bosniaks killed in the 1992 Bratunac massacre at a reconstructed mosque in the municipality (Ref A). At our request, Dodik met with the "Women of Podrinje" (WofP) and the Bratunac Imam to discuss the burial. The WofP offered a compromise location, a small Serb military cemetery just outside of town, which Dodik welcomed and pledged the RS government to support. The Mayor and municipal officials will consider the compromise proposal on May 3.

Silajdzic Stirs the Pot at the Presidency

17. (C) On April 26, the Ambassador met with Serb member of the Tri-Presidency Nebojsa Radmanovic (at Radmanovic's request) to discuss Radmanovic's concerns over a proposed official Presidency trip to New York to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the United Nations' recognition of Bosnia on May 21. According to Radmanovic, President Komsic informed him that Komsic, Silajdzic and Foreign Minister Alkalaj had arranged for the Bosnian Mission to the United Nations to host a formal reception commemorating the anniversary, which Silajdzic and Komsic planned to attend. The trip was to be formally authorized by the Presidency during a session the following week. Radmanovic said he had no substantive objections to the visit, but was concerned by Silajdzic's and Komsic's "secret maneuverings" and speculated that they had ulterior motives for the visit, such as side meetings with the UN Secretary General to raise the ICJ verdict. (Note: Silajdzic's staff confirmed that Presidency members might "have their own meetings" with UN officials. End Note.)

18. (C) Radmanovic also told the Ambassador that he found the whole idea of a head of state-level trip for the event "illogical" and "a bit irrational." He said that his two

SARAJEVO 00000937 003 OF 003

colleagues had quietly planned the entire visit while he was at a summit in Macedonia the previous week. He also repeated concerns about the role Alkalaj plays in the government, noting that the Foreign Minister had organized the trip and reception without formal Presidency- sanction or informing Radmanovic. The Ambassador agreed that the episode and visit seemed odd, but encouraged Radmanovic to attend if Silajdzic and Komsic were both going. Radmanovic confirmed that that was his intention, and told the Ambassador that he would vote to authorize the trip next week and go to New York. The Ambassador took the opportunity to again urge Radmanovic to appropriately manage the political climate in the wake of his veto of the Presidency decision on the ICJ verdict, and take substantive steps to indicate that the RS leadership understood the significance of the court's verdict.

Comment

19. (C) In our judgment, Radmanovic has good reason to be suspicious of Silajdzic's motives in proposing the New York trip. Silajdzic and his surrogates have been publicly raising the possibility of raising the ICJ verdict with the UNSC for several weeks, and there is a long, colorful history of Bosnian officials stretching and grossly overstepping official instructions and messages when abroad. That said, we have urged Radmanovic to focus on building consensus within the Presidency on any decision related to the ICJ verdict rather than on his frustrations with the decision-making process itself. We are encouraged by Dodik's reaction to Srebrenica. Unlike Federation politicians, who cannot explain how money they have pledged to Srebrenica will be used, the RS government appears poised to have several

major projects underway in just a couple weeks. If Dodik honors his commitment to us the Women of Podrinje to press municipal officials to support a compromise, we may be able to avoid a confrontation in Bratunac on May 12, but there is amply opportunity for radical Serb and/or Sarajevo-based politicians interested in a clash to derail the progress we have made this week. With this in mind, we will keep a watchful eye on Bratunac. Finally, we will continue to press moderate Bosniak parties (SDA, SDP) to challenge Silajdzic and return to playing a constructive role in Bosnia politics as well as encourage our international partners to do the same. Just back from a trip to the Middle East, Silajdzic will meet with the Ambassador on April 27 to review current issues.

MCELHANEY